

TOWN

Plan

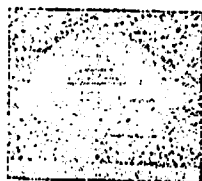
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p.1

By ADAM SWIFT

The majority of voters at Town Meeting on Monday night were not swayed by a plan to use \$1.55-million in Community Preservation Act



funds to renovate the Turkiln building on Summer Street.

The article failed by a vote of 245-162.

Members of the Historical Commission made the case that the restoration of the building was important historically and to the community. Many of those opposed to the article countered that the building's time had come and gone and that CPA funds could be put to better use.

The Turkiln building consists of two one-room schoolhouses built in 1871 and 1908 respectively,



with a connector housing bathrooms and a basement that dates to 1926.

Susanna Sheehan, an alternate member on the Historical Commission, pointed out that the original school was built by the residents of West Duxbury and was a focal point of the community.

continued on page 14

Tarkiln Renovations Rejected

continued from page one

When the school closed in 1949, the neighbors took over the building and turned it into a youth center. From the 1970s until about two years ago, the building was used almost daily as meeting space by a number of local community groups, Sheehan said.

Both the 1871 and the 1908 wings of the building maintain many historical touches, including the original chalkboards, said Historical Commission member Barbara Kiley.

The planned renovation would have maintained the historic appearance of the building while updating the mechanical and electrical systems and providing handicap accessibility.

"Once this building is restored, it will be a very popular place for people to use for all activities," Kiley said. She added that the renovation would have no impact on the tax rate, since it would be paid for with CPA funds.

Last year, Town Meeting



Historical Commission member Barbara Kiley makes the case for the renovation of the Tarkiln building.

approved \$125,000 for design plans for the renovation. Originally, it was estimated that the renovation project would cost about \$1.2 million, but over the past several months, that estimate went as high as \$2.1 million.

When bids for the project came in last week, the number fell closer to the original estimates, and the Community Preservation Committee voted to support an article for \$1.55 million.

A number of residents who spoke against the project noted the high price tag for a community building that has limited space.

"My house was built 158 years ago, and it doesn't need those kinds of repairs," said John Hamilton. He added that the Senior Center was built 10 years ago for \$2 million and provides much more meeting space than can be accommodated at the Tarkiln building.

James Sullivan warned that with the town facing possible overrides for police and fire stations and the schools, the town has to make better use of its resources.

"We're desperate for a site for a public safety building, and this parcel is in the town's control and compatible with some of those needs," Sullivan said. "Just because we spent \$125,000 last year, it's not a reason to spend 10 times that."

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**James Sullivan
Tremont Street**

Both the Finance Committee and the Fiscal Advisory Committee recommended the defeat of the Tarkiln article.

Fiscal Advisory Committee member Friend Weiler said the Tarkiln project would have limited value to the town compared to other CPC projects at this year's Town Meeting such as the purchase of the Berrybrook and Camp Wing open space.

Former Selectman Ruth Rowley said she supported the renovation, noting the role the building has played in the community for over a century.

"This adds no money on the taxes," she said. "It seems to me that it would not be a bad investment."

Finance Committee member Colleen Brayer said she was torn over the project, but noted the town has used CPC money in the past for projects such as the Alden House and the King Caesar House that are not owned by the town.

Brayer said she would have liked to see a motion reducing the amount requested in the article, but there was no further action on the request before the article was ultimately defeated.